

the health advisor

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MISSION

To promote, protect and improve the health of all people in Florida.

The Health Advisor aims to present health information to Floridians in a reader-friendly format. Pages are designed for posting or handouts. If there is a topic that you would like *The Health Advisor* to cover, contact us.

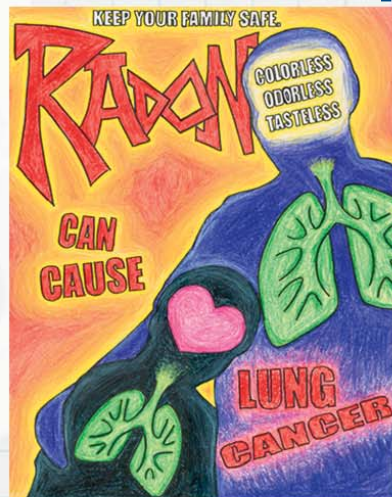
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H. Frank Farmer to Serve as Florida State Surgeon General

Florida Governor Rick Scott appointed H. Frank Farmer Jr., MD, PhD, to serve as Florida State Surgeon General. Dr. Farmer begins his tenure at the Department of Health on April 4, 2011.

Dr. Farmer was born in New Smyrna Beach, Florida where he lived until 1959. Upon graduating high school in 1959, Dr. Farmer enrolled in Stetson University in Deland, Florida, graduating with a Bachelor of Arts degree in History. He then went on to the University of Georgia, earning a Master of Arts and a PhD in History. Dr. Farmer's career began as an Assistant Professor of History at Georgia Southwestern College in Americus, Georgia. He taught for one year until he enlisted in the United States Army in 1969.

Dr. Farmer served his country in the Army from 1969–1971, receiving numerous military honors. As a decorated Vietnam Veteran, he gained extensive experience in special operations and served in the Mekong Delta as an advisor. After proudly serving his country, he returned to Americus, Georgia to teach History.

In 1972, he entered medical school at the Medical College of Georgia and then completed a residency in Internal Medicine at University Hospital in Jacksonville, from 1977–1980. From 1980–1991, he was in private medical practice in New Smyrna Beach, Florida.

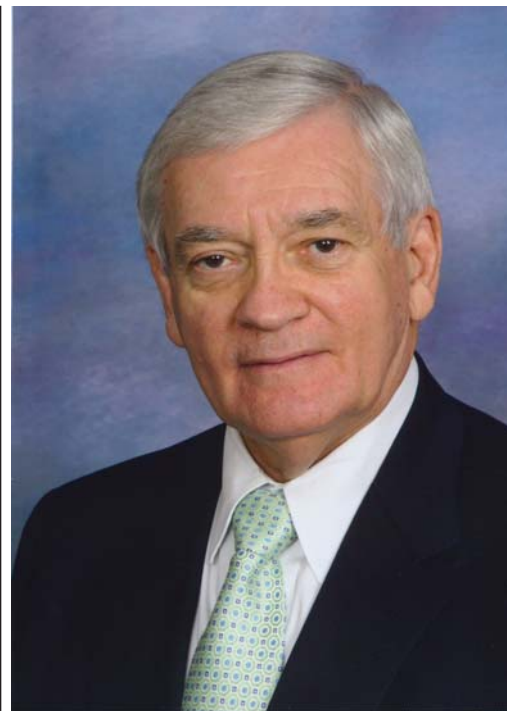
In 1983, Dr. Farmer once again served his country by joining the Florida National Guard, transferring to the Air Force Reserves in 1993. As a Reservist, he flew as a Flight Surgeon with a special operation squadron, retiring in 2004 at the rank of Colonel.

His work in the field of medicine includes his role as the Medical Director for Blue Cross/Blue Shield of Florida; private practitioner at East Volusia Internal Medicine Associates; and President of Endeavors Medical Group. Most recently, he was the Medical Director for Covance (Medical Research) in Daytona Beach, Florida.

Dr. Farmer served as President of the Florida Medical Association from 2001–2002. In 2004, he was appointed to the Florida Board of Medicine. He served as the Board's Chairman in 2006 and 2007.

He is married to Peggy Farmer and has two children, Frank, Jr, an Investment Advisor, and Kevin, an Orthopedic Surgeon with the University of Florida. Dr. Farmer's favorite hobbies are reading history books and bicycling.

Shairi Turner, MD, MPH, the Acting State Surgeon General prior to Dr. Farmer's appointment, will resume her leadership post as the department's Deputy Secretary for Health and Director of the Office of Minority Health.



"I you look back in history, you can see the great achievements that the Department of Health has played in the lives of all Floridians, and the thousands of lives it has saved. It's participated in some of the great moments in the history of Florida. The malaria epidemics, the yellow fever epidemics, the polio epidemics, and the thousands of lives that were saved by the work of members of the Department of Health. So it's a storied institution, and it's just a privilege to be able to lead that institution."

—Frank Farmer Jr., MD, PhD,
Florida State Surgeon General



Look Out for Coral Snakes

Submitted by Children's Medical Services, Florida Department of Health

Many adults and children are familiar with the rhyme: "Red touches yellow, kill a fellow; red touches black, venom lack." Since the 1860s, this rhyme has helped Floridians distinguish between the coral snake and other similar looking nonvenomous indigenous snakes.

Coral snake bites can occur year round, although the snakes are more active in warmer weather. In Florida's mild climate, even sunny winter days are warm enough for coral snakes to be present. These colorful snakes tend to be nocturnal and are drawn to overgrown and brushy areas.

On average each year, nearly 50 Floridians experience the potentially lethal bite of a coral snake. Only one antivenom for coral snake bites approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) currently exists in the U.S. In 2003, after 40 years of production, the sole manufacturer of the antivenom closed its factory—at FDA's request, a five-year supply of the antivenom was produced before the factory closed its doors. This supply was set to expire in 2008; however, the FDA approved extensions of the expiration date.

The current lot of antivenom is confirmed to be effective and has an expiration date of October 31—a sufficient supply for the present. The Florida Poison Information Center Network (FPICN) reminds physicians, pharmacists, and health care personnel to not discard current stocks of antivenom. These stocks are still effective for treating coral snake bites.

There are other antivenom products made outside the U.S., but none are widely available or FDA approved for use. Florida's Poison Centers are actively involved in addressing the public health issue raised by the loss of this antivenom. The FPICN is working on improved tracking and surveillance of all coral snake exposures and outcomes, and can help locate antivenom and manage patients.

➔ The poison centers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year: call 1.800.222.1222. For more information visit: the American Association of Poison Control Centers, www.aapcc.org Florida; the Florida Poison Information Center Network, www.fpicn.org; or the Florida Department of Health, Children's Medical Services, www.cms-kids.com.

Florida Takes First Place in the 2011 National Radon Poster Contest!

Florida student Logan Stewart of Hollywood Academy of Arts and Science is the first place winner of the 2011 National Radon Poster Contest. This is the second time in four years that a Florida student has claimed first place. The National Radon Poster Contest is sponsored by the National Radon Program Services and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency—it is an annual event for students age 9–14. The contest launches National Radon Action Month every January. The purpose of the observance is to raise awareness about indoor radon and the harmful effects of elevated indoor levels, and to encourage radon testing and radon-risk reduction. The goals of the contest are to increase the number of homes tested for radon and to educate people about reducing their exposure to elevated radon levels.

“I applaud the efforts of all students who created posters about radon and the health hazards posed by it,” said Lisa Conti, D.V.M., M.P.H., Dipl. ACVPM, director of the Division of Environmental Health.

Stewart’s poster is showcased on two websites: National Radon Program Services, sosradon.org/poster-contest and the DOH Florida Radon Program, www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/radon.

MORE ABOUT RADON Radon is a naturally occurring, radioactive gas, the number one cause of lung cancer in nonsmokers, and the second leading cause of lung cancer after cigarette smoking. Radon is colorless, odorless, and tasteless, and causes approximately 21,000 lung cancer deaths annually. Nationally, an average of 1 out of 15 homes has elevated radon and in Florida, about 1 out of 5 homes.

The only way to know if you are exposed to high radon levels is to test for it, and this can be done by a

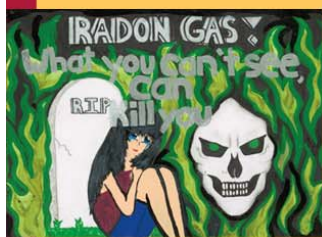
simple screening process. If elevated levels are detected, proven

techniques can be used to lower the levels. The DOH maintains a listing of Florida certified radon measurement and mitigation professionals available upon request.

THE 2012 CONTEST The DOH Radon Program coordinates the Florida portion of the national contest, and sends our first, second, and third place winners to the national competition. We invite schools to partner with DOH and encourage students to participate in each year’s contest.

DOH accepts entries from Sept. 1–Oct. 15 of each year, and announces the winning posters in December—the national poster winners are announced in January. The first, second and third place national winners, and their parents and teachers (or the sponsoring organization’s representative) win an all-expense paid trip to the contest awards ceremony. The first place winner’s artwork and message are reproduced on t-shirts, mouse pads, bookmarks, and posters that are distributed nationally.

➔ For more information about radon and the contest contact the DOH Radon Program: toll-free, 1.800.543.8279 or 850.245.4288. Or visit: www.doh.state.fl.us/environment/community/radon



Logan Stewart, 14, Hollywood Academy of Arts and Science, Hollywood: First place at the state and the national level with her poster, “Keep Your Family Safe.”

Danielle Villegas, 13, Hunter’s Creek Middle School, Orlando: Tied for second place in the Florida contest with her poster, “Radon Gas.”

Jana Henson, 13, Walker Middle School, Odessa: Tied for second place in the Florida contest with her poster, “Deadly Radon.”

Honorable mention: Hanna Jessup for “Cause/Effect; Radon can cause lung cancer” (Montford Middle, Tallahassee) and Chris Mailloux for “Keep Radon off the Radar” (Lexington Middle I.B. World School, Ft. Myers).

2011 marks the start of a new decade and could mark the turning point that smokers need to take their last puff. With the right resources, access to support, and knowledge of nicotine's effect on the body, it is possible to quit and make this decade tobacco free.

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), nicotine addiction is the most common type of chemical dependency in the United States, and presently, more than 2.5 million Floridians smoke cigarettes. When tobacco is inhaled, physical and mental responses begin to transpire. Nicotine quickly enters the bloodstream and coats the heart, brain and other internal organs, and blood vessels, hormones, and metabolism—generating pleasant feelings which make a smoker crave another cigarette for that quick “high.” Over time, the nervous system adapts to nicotine, and smokers begin to increase the amount of tobacco used in an effort to secure a rush each time.

Because the addiction to tobacco is so intense, it's estimated that the average smoker attempts to quit between eight and 11 times before ultimately quitting. In 2011, Tobacco Free Florida is encouraging smokers to commit to quit and join Floridians who've smoked and successfully kicked the addiction (61 percent of Florida adults who have ever smoked, have successfully quit). While New Year's resolutions are a popular reason for quitting, it is important for a smoker to be mentally and physically ready to quit, to make a plan and to seek help from a Quit Coach, friends, family, and medication.

“The Florida Department of Health and Tobacco Free Florida understand that quitting is challenging but not impossible. We are helping Floridians commit to quitting tobacco and making that the most important choice they make this year,” says Kim Berfield, deputy secretary of the Florida Department of Health. “In Florida we are able to provide, through the state's tobacco settlement fund, free phone, web and in-person counseling with specially trained tobacco cessation experts and nicotine replacement therapies.”

A commitment that improves health and saves money

The benefits of quitting smoking are realized immediately. In 20 minutes, heart rate and blood pressure drop. Within 12 hours, carbon monoxide levels in the blood drop to normal, and in two weeks to three months, circulation improves and lung function increases. In a year, coughing and shortness of breath decrease, and in the following five years, stroke risk is reduced.

Also, for many individuals, saving money is an important goal and added benefit. The retail price of a pack of cigarettes in Florida is \$5.63, and whether one has smoked for one, five, or ten years, many pack-a-day smokers will avoid spending about \$1,500 a year when they quit.

Sources: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, American Cancer Society, Legacy For Longer Healthier Lives, and Becoming an Ex.



The Decade to Quit



Tips to quit

- **Make a list of reasons to quit smoking.**
- **Toss out ashtrays and lighters. Remove tobacco products from your environment.**
- **Have the interior of your car cleaned to get rid of the tobacco smoke odor, and wash all clothes that carry the odor.**
- **Visit your dentist. Smoking has a tendency to yellow teeth. A good cleaning can give an immediate boost to your self-esteem.**

Support to quit

- **Call the Florida Quitline, 1.877.U.CAN.NOW, to speak with a Quit Coach who will help assess your addiction and create a personalized quit plan.**
- **Secure support from family, friends, and your health care provider. Get individual, group, or telephone counseling.**
- **Obtain medications that lessen the urge to smoke.**
- **Enroll in online counseling with the Florida Quitline at www.quitnow.net/florida where you can create a web-based quit plan.**
- **Be prepared for relapses or difficult situations—don't be discouraged if you start smoking again. Most relapses occur within the first three months after quitting.**

Viral Hepatitis Transmission in Nail Salons

By April Crowley, Division of Disease Control, Florida Department of Health



Remember, it's all right to take your own tools to a nail salon.

➔ For more information, visit www.flahepatitis.org.

MANICURES AND PEDICURES ARE A GREAT WAY TO PAMPER YOURSELF, BUT THE POTENTIAL HAZARDS OF BLOOD-BORNE PATHOGENS ARE A SERIOUS REALITY FOR ALL SERVICE PROVIDERS AND CUSTOMERS OF THE COSMETOLOGY INDUSTRY. Two very important diseases to be aware of are hepatitis B (HBV) and hepatitis C (HCV). HBV is transmitted just like HIV, through blood and body fluids. HCV is spread through contact with infected blood.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), HCV can survive on environmental surfaces at room temperature for at least 16 hours but no longer than four days. HBV can survive outside the body at least seven days. These two viruses can enter the body through the tiniest cut, scrape or break in the skin.

You should never share personal care items that may have come in contact with another person's blood, such as razors, toothbrushes, fingernail clippers, nail files, or cuticle-trimming scissors. The CDC refers to the sharing of these items as "less common risks" for contracting hepatitis B or C, but that small chance of being exposed to viral hepatitis exists, so it's good to be aware of any potential risks and practice safe hygiene.

HIV/AIDS training classes are required for all licensed cosmetologists in Florida, and nail salons fall under this category. There are currently no requirements for any type of viral hepatitis training.

Your nail salon

Does your nail salon clean their tools between customers? Don't hesitate to ask. A good rule of thumb is if the tool cannot be disinfected, it must be thrown away. Non-metal tools that should be discarded after each customer are the following:

- Nail files and emery boards
- Buffers
- Buffing discs on electric files
- Wood cuticle sticks
- Paper-toe separators

It's OK to ask salon employees if your nails are being cut and trimmed with the same tools they used on the previous customer. If the answer is "yes," you should ask if the tools were sterilized using an ultraviolet tool sterilizer. Some people prefer to bring their own nail kits to a salon—again, there is a low risk of contracting viral hepatitis when having a manicure or pedicure.

Hepatitis B

The best way to avoid hepatitis B is to get vaccinated. There is no vaccine for hepatitis C. The Florida Hepatitis Prevention Program offers free hepatitis A and B vaccines to adults (18 years and older) who are considered at risk. We also provide Hepatitis IOI classes for anyone interested in learning about hepatitis A, B, and C.

No to Mercury Yes to Fish



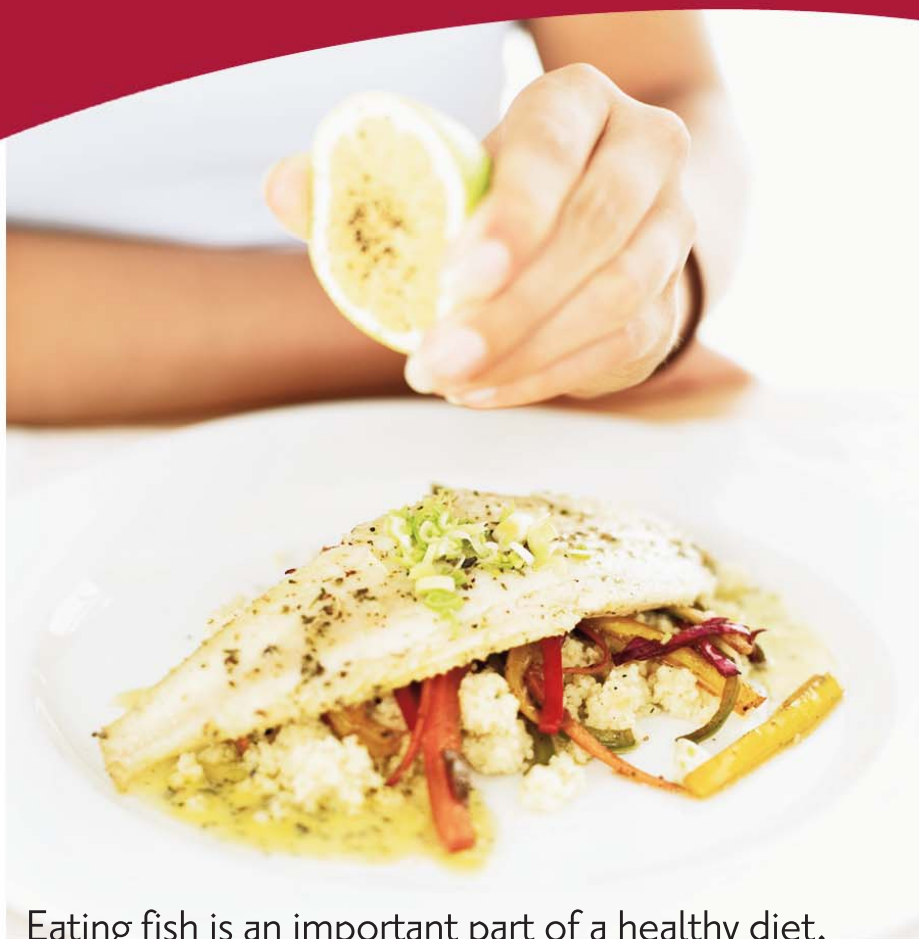
Sunshine Snapper

Looking for seafood recipes? Check out FL-Seafood.com—brought to you by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The site offers up seafood recipes, information on seafood festivals, educational materials for teachers and kids, and more. Sunshine Snapper is one of the many easy and tasty recipes that can be found on the site.

- 2 pounds Florida snapper fillets**
- 1 tablespoon butter**
- 2 tablespoons Florida orange juice**
- 2 teaspoons grated orange peel**
- 1 teaspoon salt**
- 1/8 teaspoon nutmeg**
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper**

Cut fish into 6 pieces. Place in a single layer in a lightly oiled baking dish. Combine remaining ingredients; pour over fish. Bake in a preheated 350° oven for 20–25 minutes or until fish flakes easily with a fork. Serves 6.

PER SERVING: calories, 170; calories from fat, 35; total fat, 4 g; saturated fat, 1.5 g; cholesterol, 60 mg; total carbohydrate, 1 g; protein, 31 g.



Eating fish is an important part of a healthy diet.

Rich in vitamins and low in fat, fish contains protein we need for strong bodies. It is also an excellent source of nutrition for proper growth and development. In fact, the American Heart Association recommends that you eat two meals of fish or seafood every week. However, fish consumption can be a major source of human exposure to toxins like mercury. Accurate information about the types and the amount of fish to consume is necessary for Floridians to know how to safely include fish in their diets.

The Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Environmental Public Health Tracking Program now offers information about important fish consumption choices for women of childbearing age and children with the "Fish for Your Health Wallet Card." The card encourages the health benefits of eating specific types of fish while avoiding unsafe amounts of mercury. The card lists: species of common fish available commercially, the level of mercury for the species listed, and advice on how much of each fish to eat weekly.

You can find the wallet card on DOH's Consuming Fish Safely web page: www.floridatracking.com/HealthTrackFL/Mercury. If your Florida county is working on a project to help people consume fish safely, please send us the web link and we will add it to the Consuming Fish Safely web page.

➔ Sign up for "Florida Tracking E-News" at www.floridatracking.com.



Keep Pool Fun Safe this Summer

By Patrick Fargason, Office of Communications, Florida Department of Health

Summer is here, and it's pool time for children. All across Florida, children will spend their summer days playing in pool areas, and swimming and jumping into the cool water, but despite the fun, pool safety is a serious subject. According to the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Office of Injury Prevention, for children between the ages of 1 and 4, drowning is the second leading cause of accidental death in the U.S., and most notably, Florida leads the nation in these drowning deaths.

DOH encourages parents to secure their pool and protect their children. Adhere to the three basic layers of pool safety, and keep your family safe.

LAYER 1—SUPERVISION About three-quarters of all early childhood drowning accidents occur in a residential swimming pool—most of these tragedies could have been prevented by adequate supervision. Children should never be allowed in the pool area without an adult responsible for supervision. Supervision doesn't mean an adult is in the pool area distracted while talking on a cell phone; rather, it means an adult is paying close attention and focusing on the children while they play in and around the pool. Supervision is the most critical layer of protection. The DOH WaterproofFl campaign aims to help reduce drowning among Florida's children. Visit www.waterprooffl.com for more information and to download a Water Watcher tag. The tag is an important tool that should encourage more active supervision and help control who is in charge of watching the pool while children are playing.

LAYER 2—BARRIERS A barrier is an object or device that physically blocks children from entering the pool area. DOH recommends using a number of different barriers to ensure safety: for your home, child-proof locks and door alarms on all doors that open to the outside; and for the pool area, a fence with a self-closing and self-latching gate, and gate and pool alarms. The Residential Swimming Pool Safety Act (Chapter 515, *Florida Statutes*) requires at least one physical barrier for pools built after 2000. More than 90 percent of Florida's home swimming pools were built before the law. Does your pool have the right barriers to save a child's life?

LAYER 3—EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS Always be prepared for a water emergency. The moment a child stops breathing, there is a small window of time in which resuscitation can take place. Learn life-saving skills, know proper emergency procedures, and keep a phone in the pool area if you need to call 911. Many organizations offer CPR and rescue-technique classes at little or no cost. Finally, ask your health care provider about age-appropriate swimming lessons in your area.